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Thirtieth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 2190 (2014), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) until 30 September 2015 and requested me to keep it informed of the situation on the ground and the implementation of the mandate of UNMIL. The present report provides an update on major developments since my report of 23 April 2015 (S/2015/275) and recommendations for the extension of the mandate of and further adjustments to the Mission.

II. Major developments

A. Political situation

2. During the reporting period, political discourse was focused on the expectation that the Government would fully assume its complete security responsibilities from UNMIL by 30 June 2016, which led to increased scrutiny of the performance and accountability of the State security agencies. Public perceptions of widespread corruption and the proposal, made in the context of the constitutional review process, that Liberia should be declared a Christian nation also captured public attention.

3. Legislative engagement in security sector reform intensified amid concerns about police misconduct. In April, the involvement of the Deputy Director for Operations of the Liberia National Police in a road incident that fuelled existing tensions between the police and commercial motorcyclists was discussed in the House of Representatives. On 30 April, the Minister of Justice and the Inspector General of Police provided a briefing to the House on a confrontation that had occurred between the police and commercial motorcyclists in the Paynesville area of Monrovia and proposed initiatives to minimize tensions and prevent the reoccurrence of violence. The following day, the President, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, dismissed three senior police officials: the Deputy Director for Operations, the Assistant Director for Administration and the Assistant Director for Intelligence. The Senate defence committee, while not disagreeing with the dismissals, expressed the view that the President's actions had undermined efforts by the Legislature to

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resolve tensions between the police and commercial motorcyclists and recommended a national dialogue on security sector reform.

4. The Legislature debated challenges to the implementation of the Government's UNMIL transition plan. Lawmakers highlighted the capacity shortcomings of the national security agencies and the inadequacy of the $15 million initially allocated in the draft national budget for 2015/16 to support the implementation of the plan. Some legislators called upon UNMIL to delay its drawdown. The Legislature reviewed the justice and security sector budget performance reports in order to inform decisions on current budget allocations and directed the Minister of Justice to present a realistic budget plan to strengthen security in identified high-threat areas. The Senate recommended that the Government should seek support from international partners to complement funding for the security transition. On 17 June, my Special Representative for Liberia, Karin Landgren, met the legislative leaders to encourage them to support the security sector by leading public confidence initiatives and providing the necessary resources and effective oversight. On 22 July, the House endorsed the national budget, increasing to $20 million the allocations for the security transition, subject to the realization of a contingency revenue target of $10 million; the Senate concurred on 6 August.

5. Speculation about financial difficulties in the oil sector contributed to public concern that future revenue collection might be at risk. On 16 June, the Senate discussed a preliminary report in which the serious financial challenges facing the National Oil Company of Liberia were highlighted. It emphasized that various factors, including the fall in oil prices, the departure of some companies from Liberia and management deficiencies, such as an unnecessarily large staff and excessive benefits for staff and board members, might undermine the oil programme. On 23 June, the President annulled resolutions of the National Oil Company of Liberia and the National Port Authority that provided considerable benefits for departing senior managers and board members.

6. On 25 June, the Minister of Education announced that the 2015 academic year would end on 31 July without testing and with limited opportunities for promoting pupils. Pupils staged protests in Monrovia and several counties, and the House of Representatives, which had directed the Minister to keep the schools open, sought to summon the President, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism.

7. Changes were made to the Cabinet. On 28 May, the Senate confirmed George Werner, whose earlier nomination for Minister of Health and Social Welfare had been rejected, as the Minister of Education. In June, it confirmed the nominations of the new Minister and Deputy Minister of Health and Social Welfare, notwithstanding initial debate on whether to suspend the confirmation hearings pending a review of the compliance audit by the General Auditing Commission of the incident management system of the National Ebola Task Force, in which the two officials were cited.

8. On 21 April, the River Cess County by-election was held to fill a seat in the House of Representatives left vacant by the previous incumbent's victory in the senatorial elections of December 2014. The election, which was won by the candidate from the Movement for Progressive Change, was conducted peacefully, with a turnout of 42 per cent. Litigation relating to the December elections continued, however. Some 20 complaints were resolved by the National Elections

Commission and 10 by the Supreme Court. One case remained pending before the Court, regarding Maryland County. In addition, a decision of the Court to order a partial recount of the senatorial elections in Lofa County resulted in a third case pending before the Commission. On 7 August, the Court ordered that polls should be conducted again in three precincts in Bong County.

9. Political actors were focused on the presidential elections to be held in 2017, viewed by some as representing a viable opportunity for all candidates because there will be no incumbent candidate. Recognizing that no single political party is likely to win without a run-off, parties, including the opposition Congress for Democratic Change and the Liberty Party, have already begun to seek alliances. Several candidates have been petitioned by their constituencies to contest the election, including the Vice-President, Joseph Boakai, Senator George Weah of the Congress for Democratic Change and Charles Brumskine of the Liberty Party.

B. National reconciliation, political reforms and governance

10. Some progress was made towards developing a methodology and operational guidelines for the Palava Hut mediation and dialogue programme. The reporting period was dominated, however, by the constitutional review process, in particular reactions to the proposed amendment to declare Liberia a Christian nation, which caused divisions along religious lines. Muslim organizations challenged the legality of the proposal, whereas some Christian organizations advocated holding a referendum on it. The President and the President of the Senate pro tempore appealed for national unity and religious tolerance, whereas senators such as Jewel Howard Taylor and Prince Yormie Johnson campaigned in favour of the proposal. On 19 May, some 200 Muslims protested at the Legislature and submitted a petition against the proposal. The Liberia Council of Churches is consulting its members, given the diverse views within the Christian community. Although the Constitution Review Committee has submitted the final report on the review process to the President, no amendment proposals have yet been submitted to the Legislature.

11. On 5 May, the Women of Liberia Constitutional Review Task Force finalized a strategic framework for advocacy on women's issues and engagement in the constitutional review process. Discussions were also conducted in the House of Representatives committee on gender equity and child development with women leaders to discuss the harmonization of draft gender parity proposals introduced in the Legislature in August 2013 and proposals made during the constitutional review process to advance gender equality.

12. Other governance initiatives also moved forward during the reporting period. Following the launch of a national deconcentration platform in February, the first county service centre was opened in Grand Bassa County on 30 June. Training of county-based civil servants began in June with a workshop for 60 public officials. Draft policies on land dispute resolution and land administration were presented to the executive branch in April. The former provided guidelines and mechanisms for the resolution of land disputes and the latter defined the administrative framework on land management to support the Liberia land authority once it is established. On 14 June, the Government released $1 million to the reconfigured National Benefit-sharing Trust Board for distribution as part of the Government's debt of $2 million in unpaid benefits to communities affected by forestry concession operations.

13. As noted in my previous report, on 7 April the General Auditing Commission submitted to the Senate its compliance audit on Ebola Task Force disbursements from some bank accounts. On 13 May, the Task Force submitted a defence of the financial irregularities noted in the Commission's audit, in which it acknowledged non-compliance with the required public financial management and procurement laws while also asserting that the auditors had applied "unrealistic and unreasonable requirements". It argued that it should not be held responsible for financial irregularities emanating from transactions carried out under instructions from various ministries. On 20 May, the Commission issued a statement in defence of the audit in which it declared its commitment to fulfilling its legal mandate notwithstanding the threats and intimidation that had followed the publication of the audit.

14. Limited progress was made with regard to tackling corruption, which dominated public attention. The General Auditing Commission published several reports, including on the administration of infrastructure projects by the Ministry of Public Works, in which it detailed irregularities and internal control deficiencies. On 22 April, the President suspended with pay the Managing Director and Comptroller of the National Port Authority on the basis of the findings of the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission and, on 20 July, the Ministry of Justice filed an indictment in the case. No indictments were issued in cases that the Commission had forwarded to the Ministry for prosecution in 2014.

15. Transparency and accountability improved in the extractive sector and in public revenue-generating entities. The National Bureau of Concessions developed a concessions monitoring template and is establishing a national concessions cadastre, which is a specialized automated property rights registry for overseeing the granting and managing of exploration and exploitation licences for natural resources. A new steering committee of the Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative was constituted following the expiration of the mandate of its former members; focal points were appointed in each county to enhance transparency and accountability in extractive resources governance. On 15 June, the Legislature's joint public accounts committee began 12 investigations of revenue-generating entities on the basis of previous reports by the General Auditing Commission, which included the Liberia Revenue Authority and the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning in their handling of iron ore sales. In addition, the trial of former senior officials of the Forestry Development Authority on charges of illegal issuance of logging licences, which allegedly caused a loss in revenue of $6 million, continued. On 25 June, the President announced a series of government transparency targets as part of the Open Government Partnership, focusing on citizen participation, accountability and integrity, as well as technology and innovation.

C. Security situation

16. The security situation remained stable but fragile. Insecurity was characterized by incidents of public discontent that resulted in violence, including tensions between commercial motorcyclists and security personnel and between concessionaires and affected communities, as well as protests for post-Ebola care and compensation.

17. On 14 April, an off-duty soldier allegedly killed a commercial motorcyclist in the Paynesville area of Monrovia. Following an investigation, it was recommended that four individuals should be charged for their alleged involvement in the death. On 16 April, eight police officers were injured and six police stations damaged in the same area of Monrovia during a confrontation between the police and more than 1,000 community members and commercial motorcyclists. The violence erupted after a motorcyclist was killed while being apprehended by the police, following an unsuccessful attempt to avoid arrest for a traffic violation. Charges were brought against 30 motorcyclists for offences committed during the incident and a police officer was charged with murder for the death of the motorcyclist.

18. On 7 May, some 40 workers of the Golden Veroleum Liberia palm oil concession in Sinoe County who were seeking salary increases staged a violent protest during which they temporarily detained senior company officials. On 26 May, more than 200 young people protesting at another Golden Veroleum Liberia facility in Sinoe County against the alleged failure to conduct sufficient consultations with affected communities and obtain their free and informed consent before signing concession agreements became violent after being denied access to a senior company official, looting and destroying property and injuring government and company officials. In both incidents, UNMIL military and police units were deployed to support the national police in restoring stability. Communities and civil society organizations stepped up their calls for a review of the legal framework governing concessions to accommodate their interests.

19. On 2 June, residents of the Gardnersville area of Monrovia staged a peaceful demonstration against government plans to proceed with mass evictions following the designation of the area as industrial land. The Government temporarily suspended the evictions. UNMIL actively encouraged all stakeholders to seek a peaceful resolution of the matter.

20. Public discontent over post-Ebola recovery measures resulted in demonstrations by Ebola survivors, demanding medical care, and by health-care workers, demanding payment of moneys and other benefits for their work during the epidemic.

D. Regional issues

21. The situation in the area bordering Côte d'Ivoire remained generally stable, notwithstanding the incidents detailed in my report of 7 May 2015 on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) (S/2015/320). In addition, Ivorians reportedly engaged in incidents of looting and abductions, as well as illegal farming and logging, in Liberia. On 27 April, six Ivorians suspected of illegal farming were arrested and deported. On 9 July, 2,000 rounds of shotgun ammunition were seized from a Guinean who was crossing into Liberia.

22. On 25 June, community representatives, local and national government officials and security personnel from Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire met for the first time since the closure of the border as a result of the Ebola epidemic in 2014. At the meeting, facilitated by the Danish Refugee Council, the participants discussed tensions resulting from security incidents that had triggered the displacement of Ivorians into Liberia and reports of incidents of shooting at Liberians on the Cavalla River by Ivorian forces, including a fatal shooting on 30 March. In addition, efforts

were made to revitalize the Mano River Union cross-border security strategy, which has been incorporated into the post-Ebola recovery strategy. The Governments of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire postponed the second session of the joint council of chiefs and elders scheduled for May until after the elections in Côte d'Ivoire, to be held in October.

E. Humanitarian situation

23. On 9 May, Liberia was declared free of Ebola by the World Health Organization, following 42 days since the last laboratory-confirmed victim was buried. On 29 June, however, Ebola resurfaced with a new death, followed by five infected persons linked to that index case, one of whom also died. The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare swiftly reacted and galvanized support for the response from the United Nations and other humanitarian partners. On 20 July, four Ebola survivors were released from a treatment centre in Monrovia. Humanitarian partners adjusted their support to focus on the recovery of the health-care system and building resilience for future shocks, and essential health-care services and immunization campaigns resumed. On 12 May, the President released a plan for building a resilient health-care system, which included priority areas for investment, namely the health-care workforce, health-care infrastructure, and epidemic preparedness, surveillance and response. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights continued to lead the protection cluster that monitored human rights-related Ebola recovery issues and advocated against stigmatization of and discrimination against vulnerable groups, including survivors of and children orphaned by Ebola.

24. As at 1 August, Liberia was hosting 38,480 registered Ivorian refugees, with 29,719 in camps and 8,761 in host communities. More than 8,000 have expressed interest in returning to Côte d'Ivoire. Facilitated voluntary repatriation remained suspended, however, and the Ivorian borders remained closed as at 1 August. Notwithstanding the agreement reached between the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in March, the process was subsequently suspended indefinitely by the Government of Côte d'Ivoire.

25. The Legislature continued to consider a bill submitted on 24 February that would establish a national disaster management agency.

F. Human rights situation

26. During the reporting period, long-standing human rights issues such as harmful traditional practices, including female genital mutilation and forced initiation into secret societies, remained of concern. The incidence of sexual and gender-based violence, including rape, remained high and, notwithstanding the existence of national programmes to tackle child sexual abuse, rape of minors continued to account for most reported cases. The Government, with United Nations support, organized community dialogues in 10 counties, focusing on strategies for community engagement and ownership in combating sexual and gender-based violence, which resulted in the elaboration of a joint programme strategic framework that was validated by stakeholders on 1 July.

27. In May, with UNMIL technical support, Liberia participated in the second cycle of the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council, during which concern was expressed about the failure to implement some recommendations made during the first cycle, in 2010, including in areas such as implementing the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, combating sexual and gender-based violence and discrimination against women, eliminating female genital mutilation and other harmful traditional practices, abolishing the death penalty, strengthening the justice and security sector and ratifying outstanding human rights treaties. Liberia was commended, however, for the progress made in other areas, including launching a national human rights action plan, ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopting the Children's Law, which furthers children's rights in line with international standards, and introducing a road map for national healing, peacebuilding and reconciliation.

28. The steering committee of the national human rights action plan continued to engage with State and civil society stakeholders in developing strategies to support and monitor the implementation of the plan and worked to establish human rights focal points in ministries and other relevant institutions, a priority for effective coordination and reporting. In June, UNMIL organized a training session on mainstreaming human rights and gender for 25 officers in government agencies, civil society organizations and the Independent National Commission on Human Rights.

29. The effectiveness of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights continued to be undermined by internal weaknesses and inadequate governance procedures. The contracts of human rights monitors deployed in eight counties that were initially funded through the Peacebuilding Fund ended in June and could not be extended through the government budget, raising concerns about the ability of the Commission to sustain its presence in the counties, as required for handling public complaints. Following advocacy by the United Nations and civil society, in May the Commission appointed 10 monitors on the Government's payroll, who are deployed to four counties.

G. Economic situation

30. Owing to the Ebola crisis, economic growth for 2014 fell from a projected 5.9 per cent to between 0.7 and 0.9 per cent, a rate projected to continue in 2015. The cumulative loss of output was equivalent to 7.7 per cent of the gross domestic product, given that most sectors experienced contraction and investment, while expansion in the extractive and agricultural sectors was suspended. Mining output fell from 4.4 to 1.0 per cent and the World Bank forecast for agricultural output growth fell from 3.5 to 1.3 per cent in 2014. Tax revenue also declined by 20.5 per cent from the pre-crisis projections for 2014.

31. On 2 June, the President submitted to the Legislature a draft national budget for 2015/16 totalling $604 million, a decrease of 4.9 per cent from the previous budget. It included support for the Agenda for Transformation, the post-Ebola Economic Stabilization and Recovery Plan and the UNMIL transition plan. Allocations included $186.8 million (31 per cent) for public administration and $90.4 million (15 per cent) for the rule of law and security sectors, including $15 million for activities relating to the security transition. Major expenditure included $252.1 million for salaries

(41.7 per cent), $79.4 million for education sector support, $73.0 million for the health sector and $23.2 million for the Social Development Fund. Domestic revenue of $465.61 million is expected to support the budget, with the remaining funds to be provided by grants and budget support programmes ($66.23 million), loans ($58.6 million) and the surplus from the 2014/15 fiscal year ($13.58 million). On 22 July, the House of Representatives approved a budget of $622.74 million, which was followed by Senate concurrence on 6 August.

32. Consumer price inflation declined to 7.3 per cent in March 2015 from 13.5 per cent in September 2014. In an effort to expand the fiscal space and meet the post-Ebola recovery needs, the Government began a joint review of the portfolios of internal financial institutions and other development partners to reprogramme existing funds. On 10 July, I hosted an international Ebola recovery conference that led to the three most affected countries receiving pledges of more than $5 billion, of which Liberia received pledges of $812 million towards the implementation of the Economic Stabilization and Recovery Plan for recovery and resilience projects from 2015 to 2017, in addition to the disbursement of $1.6 billion in funds committed by partners before the crisis.

III. Development of national security and justice capacity

A. Security transition

33. The Government increased its focus on developing capacity to fully assume complete security responsibilities from UNMIL by 30 June 2016, in line with its transition plan. The capability of security sector institutions to effectively manage the implementation of their respective components of the plan, however, remained of concern. The joint implementation group, comprising senior representatives of the Government, UNMIL and the donor community, is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the plan. It held its first meeting on 3 June, during which the need for additional funding for the security sector was highlighted. Subsequently, a detailed breakdown of transition-related costs was developed to facilitate donor support. The Ministry of Justice assessed that $37 million was needed in 2015/16, of which $20 million has been allocated to date, as indicated in paragraph 4 above. To ensure effective coordination, the United Nations developed a plan outlining support to the transition-related activities of the Government.

34. UNMIL engaged with national counterparts throughout the security sector to encourage a structured and prioritized approach to the implementation of the transition plan. Gradual improvements have been realized, including regular meetings of the joint security committee convened by the Minister of Justice and of a joint transition task force comprising government agencies and the United Nations. UNMIL also supported the national authorities in reaching out to communities affected by the Mission's drawdown, hosting radio programmes and disseminating information to allay public anxiety.

35. The joint transition task force has identified and accorded priority to the security responsibilities of UNMIL, including the destruction of explosives, security at corrections facilities and airfield maintenance, as tasks that form an essential part of the security transition process. As at 1 August, the Government had assumed responsibility for cash escorts, security for the Office of the President and additional guard duties.

B. National security strategy and architecture

36. Progress was made, with UNMIL support, in finalizing the draft police and immigration acts, which are aimed at professionalizing the police and the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, bringing them into line with democratic principles. Following consultations and a public validation exercise, the acts were expected to be submitted to the President for review and onward submission to the Legislature. Although three workshops in relation to the draft firearms and ammunition control act have been held for the Legislature to date, the proposed legislation has remained pending before a Senate committee since November 2014.

37. New county security councils were established in Maryland and Sinoe counties, bringing their number to 10. County and district security councils have been designed to play a prominent role in community security and are expected to be established in all counties by 30 June 2016. Following joint training for security sector agencies on weapons marking in March, 97 per cent of the military's weapons had been marked and recorded by mid-July.

C. National police

38. As at 1 August, there were 4,886 national police officers, of whom 17.6 per cent were women. To achieve the target of an additional 1,600 officers by June 2016, the police training academy reduced the length of the basic curriculum from nine to six months, including two months of field-based training. Furthermore, with the support of UNMIL, the academy launched mobile training courses on managerial competencies for 376 officers, including 60 women, throughout the country.

39. Deployment remained limited beyond Montserrado County, where nearly 80 per cent of police officers are serving. A committee was established within the police to make proposals on decentralization and to address structural and command issues. UNMIL had advocated the deployment of the 291 recruits who graduated in May 2014 to counties where the police presence remained inadequate.

40. As indicated in paragraph 3 above, the President dismissed three senior police officials in May, amid concerns expressed by the public and the Legislature about abuse of power, misconduct and poor performance. Officers from within the police ranks replaced the dismissed officials.

41. The professional standards division, with UNMIL support, disseminated to police officers information on conduct and discipline and held community outreach campaigns about citizens' rights and mechanisms to report police misconduct, abuse and corruption. Free telephone hotlines for reporting such cases were launched in June.

42. In April, a strategic development framework detailing the substantive areas of intervention necessary to enable the successful assumption of security responsibilities from UNMIL was submitted to the police leadership for approval. Priorities included reviewing the organizational structure and systems and enhancing institutional integrity and oversight.

43. The incidents in Monrovia and Sinoe County detailed in paragraphs 17 and 18 above highlighted shortcomings with regard to police operational preparedness and

response capability in addressing public disorder or crisis situations, as well as weak command and control structures, resulting in uncoordinated responses at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. The police demonstrated improved capacity during the celebrations to mark Independence Day on 27 July, when enhanced planning, deployment and coordination ensured that security and public order were maintained effectively and proactively, the prior concession-related tensions in Grand Kru and Sinoe counties notwithstanding. UNMIL, with donor support, sought to increase targeted capacity-building aimed at enhancing command and control and supported the operational coordination capacity of the police national operations centre.

44. The Liberian transnational crime unit conducted several operations, including investigations into drug trafficking, money-laundering and wildlife smuggling, achievements that could be built upon with additional guidance from the unit's executive management board.

D. Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization

45. As at 1 August, the strength of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization stood at 2,097 personnel, of whom 31.3 per cent were women. To achieve the targeted strength of 3,000 officers by 2017, the Bureau is fast-tracking the training of new recruits. On 7 June, training began for 254 recruits, for the first time conducted by the Bureau's training department at the former UNMIL camp in Sinje. Renovation of the Bureau's training facility in Foya remained in progress, given that, absent of donor support, it depends entirely on government funding.

46. In April, the Bureau finalized its development framework, which accorded priority to a review of its organizational structure and systems, institutional integrity and oversight, and the need to retrench officers deemed unfit for service.

E. Judicial, legal and corrections institutions

47. Prolonged pretrial detention and the resulting overcrowding of prisons, and the associated human rights and due process issues, remained intractable concerns. As at 1 August, persons held in pretrial detention accounted for 68 per cent of the prison population nationwide and as much as 82 per cent of the population of the Monrovia Central Prison. Training was held for court inspectors and judicial instructors on court administration and for police officers and prosecutors on effective investigation and prosecution. Under the guidance of the task force on pretrial detention, supported by UNMIL and bilateral partners, a case tracking initiative for serious crimes resulted in indictments being filed in more than 100 cases. Challenges remained, however, in terms of the capacity of the criminal justice system to bring those cases to trial in a timely manner.

48. UNMIL continued to call for efforts to address systemic problems in the justice system, including the limited public defence capacity and the absence of a national policy for legal aid. It also continued to engage with national partners in finalizing the national law reform policy and supported the police in a pilot project aimed at increasing focus on upholding human rights and reducing prolonged detention. In July, it launched a project to support government efforts to establish a

witness protection programme, which was needed to strengthen national capacity to investigate and prosecute serious crimes, including corruption.

49. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection trained its staff throughout the country on data collection and coordination of cases of sexual and gender-based violence to strengthen information coordination and targeted intervention. A database to track cases of such violence was established in June at the Ministry of Justice, facilitating an increase in the number of indictments.

50. In June, the Justice and Security Board, co-chaired by representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the judiciary and UNMIL, agreed to refocus the priorities at the justice and security hubs in Zwedru and Harper, moving from infrastructure to the priority services identified in the security transition plan. The Board also highlighted the need for improved coordination and timely provision of information on the use of government funds before external sources of funding were allocated to support the transition.

51. As at 1 August, the prison population stood at 1,888 prisoners, an increase of 8.8 per cent since 15 April. UNMIL continued to augment the capacity of the Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation with regard to prison management, including through advocacy, training and co-location. With support from the Government of Sweden, capacity-building on prison security and the use of non-lethal force contributed to a decrease of 26 per cent in the number of prison escapes. On 26 May, a national prison strategic plan was submitted to the Ministry of Justice, aimed at professionalizing the Bureau by strengthening prison oversight, in coordination with the Independent National Commission on Human Rights, and advancing partnerships with the United Nations country team. The lack of political will to move away from the use of incarceration, together with insufficient budgeting, has, however, impeded progress.

F. Armed forces

52. As at 1 August, 1,915 personnel, including 76 women, were serving in the armed forces. Liberia continued to contribute a platoon to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. The army received predeployment training by the Government of the United States of America through its Operation Onward Liberty.

IV. Deployment of the Mission

53. By its resolution 2215 (2015), the Security Council authorized the resumption of the drawdown of UNMIL after determining, consistent with resolution 2190 (2014), that Liberia had made significant progress in combating the Ebola outbreak that had posed a threat to the country's peace and stability. The drawdown would bring the authorized military and police strengths of the Mission to 3,590 and 1,515 personnel, respectively, by September 2015. In addition, the Council requested me to continue to streamline the activities of UNMIL across its civilian, police and military components, taking into account the downsizing of the military and police components, as well as the narrowing of the Mission's mandate pursuant to resolution 2190 (2014), with a view to consolidating the civilian, military and police presence of

UNMIL in line with the expectation of the Council that the Government would fully assume its security responsibilities from the Mission no later than 30 June 2016.

A. Military component

54. As indicated in my previous reports, UNMIL has been progressively drawing down since 2006, bringing the Mission from its peak authorized strength of 15,250 to the current authorized strength of 4,811. As at 1 August, the UNMIL military strength stood at 3,753 personnel, including 144 women. The military component included a force headquarters in Monrovia and three infantry battalions deployed in Monrovia and along the country's borders with Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea.

55. Pursuant to resolution 2215 (2015), UNMIL withdrew 892 troops by 1 August, including those from its quick reaction force (650 troops) and engineering (170 personnel) and aviation (43 personnel) units, nine staff officers and 20 military observers. In August, further reductions will be effected in the medical (60 personnel), transport (58 personnel) and engineering (191 personnel) units, in addition to 20 staff officers and eight military observers, bringing the force within the new authorized ceiling of 3,590 by September.

56. Given that infantry are no longer present in 7 of the 15 counties, the force is focused on high-risk areas and has shifted to a more mobile posture, in order to project military effect. In accordance with resolution 2190 (2014), UNMIL continues to protect the population within its capabilities and areas of deployment, without prejudice to the primary responsibility of the Liberian authorities.

57. In view of the expectation of the Security Council that the Government will fully assume its security responsibilities from UNMIL by 30 June 2016, further reductions of the force are possible. From 1 July 2016, at which point the Liberian authorities would have fully assumed routine security and stability tasks, including deterrence and the protection of civilians, it is envisaged that the Mission would consolidate one battalion in Monrovia with the related enablers, in particular aviation, for the purpose of providing a rapid response capability for the national security agencies should the security situation seriously deteriorate. Retaining that capacity for an appropriate period to assess and test the capacity of the Liberian security agencies to maintain security and stability independently of the peacekeeping operation would allow the Mission to remain in a position to respond, if required, to any incident that could risk a strategic reversal. The quick reaction force established within UNOCI in accordance with resolution 2162 (2014) would provide over-the-horizon support to UNMIL in the event of a serious deterioration in the security situation in Liberia, without prejudice to its primary responsibility for providing security in Côte d'Ivoire.

58. Specifically, it is proposed that, by 1 July 2016, the UNMIL force comprise 1,240 military personnel, including a battalion (700 troops), a support company (55 troops), a force headquarters (40 personnel), six military utility helicopters (174 personnel), a level II hospital (87 personnel), transport (44 personnel) and engineering (80 personnel) units, as well as 50 military observers and 10 military police officers, which would remain in Liberia until the withdrawal of the Mission. Recommendations in that regard would be provided in a future report, after the conclusion of the security transition, taking into account the performance of national security agencies and the situation on the ground.

B. Police component

59. As at 1 August, the police strength of UNMIL stood at 1,389 personnel, including 239 women, of an authorized strength of 1,795 personnel, with 498 police and immigration advisers and 1,017 officers in eight formed police units. Three units were deployed in Monrovia and one each in Gbarnga, Greenville, Tubmanburg, Voinjama and Zwedru. There were also 29 corrections advisers.

60. Pursuant to resolution 2190 (2014), by which UNMIL was instructed to put renewed focus on supporting the Government to achieve a successful transition by helping to expedite its readiness to assume security responsibilities throughout Liberia, the UNMIL police component adopted a county-based capacity-building model in support of the national police and immigration authorities, with a focus on improving management and leadership, including delegation of command and control. It concentrated its technical and logistical resources at the county level, supported by a specialist base in Monrovia focused on strategic and mid-level management mentoring of the police, the immigration authorities, the transnational crime unit and the police training academy. In addition, UNMIL is employing strategies aimed at ensuring the deployment and retention of police advisers with the requisite experience and specialist skills. Taking into account the reduction of UNMIL field offices detailed in paragraph 63 below, it is proposed that the number of police and immigration advisers be gradually reduced, primarily through attrition, reaching 226 by 1 July 2016.

61. Given the expectation of the Security Council that the security transition will be concluded by 30 June 2016, additional reductions in the number of formed police units are possible. Specifically, between January and June 2016, it is recommended that five units be gradually withdrawn, leaving three, totalling some 400 personnel, in Liberia by 1 July 2016, with one each deployed in Gbarnga, Monrovia and Zwedru. They would have the primary task of securing the United Nations personnel and installations that would remain in Liberia until the withdrawal of the Mission. Recommendations in that regard would be provided after the conclusion of the security transition, taking into account the performance of the national security agencies and the situation on the ground.

C. Civilian component

62. Adjustments continued to be made to the civilian component with a view to enhancing the implementation of the streamlined substantive mandate accorded to it under resolution 2190 (2014), specifically with regard to good offices and provision of political support to critical political and institutional reform processes, as well as in the development of Liberia and the deconcentration of the national security, justice and human rights sectors, as required for a successful security transition process.

63. Taking into account the request by the Security Council in resolution 2215 (2015) that the civilian presence of UNMIL streamline its activities and consolidate, the number of sites occupied by members of the UNMIL military, police or civilian component will be reduced from the current 73 to 52 by 30 June 2016 and include five regional offices in Bomi, Bong, Grand Gedeh, Maryland and Montserrado counties, in addition to UNMIL headquarters. The regional offices represent a

reduction from field offices in each of the 15 counties and will continue to advance mandate implementation, in particular with regard to the security transition and human rights, as well as good offices and political support for governance reform processes, and support the Government in discharging its responsibility to protect civilians. The regional offices will be consolidated in population and transportation centres, selected on the basis of an integrated planning process. As at 1 August, field offices had been closed in Montserrado and River Cess counties and their responsibilities transferred to offices in Margibi and Grand Bassa counties, respectively.

64. As at 1 August, 1,342 civilian personnel, including United Nations Volunteers, were serving with UNMIL, of a budgeted total of 1,455. In total, 22.8 per cent of the civilian personnel were women, including some 26 per cent of the 508 substantive staff and 21 per cent of the 834 administrative staff.

D. Support considerations

65. The rainy season, from May to October, presents unique challenges because the limited road network cannot sustain major logistics movements and flight operations are significantly reduced. There are no in-country commercial alternatives to the UNMIL military and transport units that keep supply lines open and there are also serious shortcomings in the national medical system. To sustain the deployment beyond Monrovia of civilian and police personnel, and to facilitate the deployment in extremis of military personnel, including from UNOCI, UNMIL will continue to require some level of critical enabling capability, including heavy-lift ground transportation, air capability, sea transportation, engineering capacity and medical facilities. Where feasible, UNMIL will seek to employ commercial alternatives for the provision of enabling capability, including through pooled common services with the United Nations country team. As part of a responsible and well-managed drawdown, UNMIL will continue environmental clean-up activities as military and other mission sites are closed and United Nations-owned equipment is written off and disposed of, where appropriate.

E. Conduct and discipline

66. UNMIL continued to raise awareness of sexual exploitation and abuse, reaching out to young people and community members, including religious and community leaders. During the reporting period, six allegations of serious misconduct were recorded, including two of sexual exploitation and abuse.

F. Security and safety of United Nations personnel

67. No major security incidents against United Nations personnel were recorded during the reporting period, although three weapons-related crimes resulting in the injury of two staff members, as well as 10 non-weapons-related crimes, were committed. In addition, three staff members were injured in road traffic accidents. There were 87 road traffic accidents involving United Nations personnel and two reports of vandalism to United Nations property. Nine incidents of arrest and detention of United Nations personnel were recorded.

V. Financial implications

68. The General Assembly, by its resolution 69/259 B, appropriated the amount of $344.7 million for the maintenance of the Mission for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016. Should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNMIL beyond 30 September 2015, the cost of maintaining the Mission until 30 June 2016 would be limited to the amounts approved by the Assembly.

69. As at 7 August, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNMIL amounted to $136.3 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to $4,771.2 million.

70. As at 30 June, the amounts owed to troop and formed police contributors totalled some $42.5 million. Reimbursement of troop/formed police costs had been made up for the period up to 31 March, while partial reimbursement of the costs of contingent-owned equipment had been made for the period up to 31 March, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

VI. Observations

71. In less than a year, the Government of Liberia will assume all its security responsibilities from UNMIL, marking a historic moment in post-conflict Liberia when the fate of the country and the protection of its citizens will, for the first time in more than a decade, be completely in the hands of the national authorities. It will be an important milestone, a demonstration of confidence that the country has turned the corner from conflict, disorder and dependence to a future of sustained peace, unity and independence.

72. I welcome the important progress made to date by the Government, with support from UNMIL and other partners. At the same time, challenges remain that will require additional assistance on all fronts in order to complete the transition by 30 June 2016 in line with the expectation of the Security Council. All stakeholders must sustain their focus on implementing the ambitious transition plan developed by the Government and also on the national reconciliation and continuing political reforms that are essential for consolidating peace. In addition, successfully implementing the transition plan will require appropriate-level engagement within ministries and security agencies, so that timely decisions may be taken and the necessary change effected. I therefore call upon the leaders of State institutions to remain proactive in directing and overseeing the implementation of the transition plan.

73. The increased engagement of the members of the Legislature in security sector reform is most welcome, especially given their crucial oversight role and statutory responsibility as the representatives of the people of Liberia. I welcome the legislators' interest in conducting a national dialogue on security sector reform that could potentially lead to a social compact between the security actors and the public. All citizens — community members and leaders, traditional authorities and civil society — must have meaningful opportunities to share their vision of how Liberian security agencies should protect civilians, given that a good relationship and trust between security actors and the public are essential for stability. I urge that the draft police and immigration services acts be submitted in a timely fashion to the Office of the President and trust that they would thereafter be submitted for the

urgent action of the Legislature and receive prompt attention, given that they are critical to the success of the security transition. I remain concerned that important legislation, such as the draft firearms and ammunition control act, has been pending with the Legislature for more than half a year.

74. Important efforts have been made to professionalize the national security and defence institutions and to enhance their accountability. The establishment of a change management committee within the national police could help to develop management capacity, which is required to transform the agency. Strengthened management and leadership capacity remains an important priority throughout the security sector. The operational mandate of the transnational crime unit needs to be strengthened and the support provided by national, regional and international stakeholders should be enhanced and delivered in a more coordinated and systematic way in order for the unit to achieve its mandate of preventing the spread of organized crime in Liberia, especially as UNMIL draws down. I have long expressed concern about the failure to hold individual security officers accountable for abuses under the law and am therefore encouraged by the recent action taken by the Government to further accountability for such abuses.

75. A successful security transition also requires strengthened justice, human rights and corrections institutions. I am concerned by the reversal of the gains realized during the Ebola outbreak in reducing pretrial detention, as well as by the persistently poor conditions in corrections institutions. I urge the Government and its partners to pay renewed attention to tackling those persistent challenges.

76. I am also concerned about a recent surge in violent public disturbances, which underscores deficiencies in the response capacity of the police. There remains an urgent need to deploy police officers and other security actors, with the necessary logistical support, beyond Monrovia and to increase their understanding and application of human rights standards.

77. The undercurrent of public discontent and alienation expressed through violent disturbances emphasizes the urgency of taking forward a meaningful national reconciliation process in order to heal social cleavages that leave many feeling excluded from opportunities. Addressing feelings of marginalization will require increased transparency in the public sector, stronger commitment to combating corruption and active promotion of dialogue on decentralization and concession processes. Six years ago, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission released its final report, which contained important recommendations for advancing reconciliation and addressing fundamental aspects of accountability, which are essential for lasting peace. Many of those recommendations have yet to be implemented. I once again urge the people and Government of Liberia to engage in a meaningful dialogue about how to take the critical reconciliation process forward.

78. The persistently high incidence of sexual and gender-based violence, including rape, especially of minors, is of serious concern, although I recognize that renewed efforts have been made to tackle that scourge, including community engagement and effective tracking. While I welcome the deployment of human rights monitors by the Independent National Commission on Human Rights, I remain concerned about the Commission's ability to plan and budget effectively. The Government should redouble its efforts to provide the Commission with resources adequate for it to carry out its duties fully. I also recall the responsibility of the Government to submit its outstanding reports to the treaty bodies and to implement the pending

recommendations made during the universal periodic review process, including with regard to outlawing female genital mutilation and abolishing the death penalty.

79. After more than a year of national tragedy amid an Ebola outbreak that had an impact on nearly all aspects of the State and society, I am profoundly relieved that Liberia was declared free of Ebola on 9 May. There remains, however, a need for vigilance, given the continued presence of the disease in the subregion and unknown factors about its transmission. Indeed, on 29 June, Liberia registered an Ebola-related death, to which five additional cases were subsequently linked. While regretting that the disease has reappeared in Liberia, I welcome the determination of the people and Government to respond swiftly and decisively to prevent a reversal in the gains made in efforts to combat the spread of the virus, as demonstrated by, among others, the protection of survivors against stigmatization and discrimination and the provision of effective treatment that allowed four newly infected persons to be released, cured, from the treatment centre.

80. An important lesson to be drawn from the Ebola epidemic is the importance of strong regional and bilateral cooperation mechanisms. I therefore call upon the States members of the Mano River Union to continue their efforts aimed at establishing effective cross-border coordination mechanisms, which would help to address risks that cannot be contained within borders, including security threats and health crises. Furthermore, I strongly encourage the Governments of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire to maintain the momentum of their bilateral cooperation, including within the framework of the quadripartite meetings with UNMIL and UNOCI. I reiterate my expectation that the two Governments will take action to investigate and bring to justice the murderers of the UNOCI peacekeepers in 2012.

81. Taking into account the crucial tasks that must be completed to achieve a successful transition of the security responsibilities of UNMIL to the Liberian authorities, in a responsible manner that mitigates, to the extent possible, the risk of reversing the hard-won gains made since the end of the civil war, I recommend that the mandate of UNMIL be extended for a year, until 30 September 2016. Given that the Government will become fully responsible for security and stability tasks, including protection of civilians, upon the conclusion of the security transition on 30 June 2016, I also recommend a drawdown of UNMIL uniformed personnel, as detailed in paragraphs 58, 60 and 61 above, resulting in an authorized strength of 1,240 military personnel and 606 police personnel by 1 July 2016. UNMIL military and formed police units would focus primarily on protecting United Nations personnel and installations and would be available as a rapid response capability for the Liberian security agencies in the event of a serious deterioration in the security situation, until the withdrawal of the Mission. In addition, the quick reaction force established within UNOCI in accordance with resolution 2162 (2014) would provide support, if required, without prejudice to its primary responsibility of fulfilling the Operation's mandate. Meanwhile, the civilian presence of UNMIL will continue to be consolidated, as detailed in paragraph 63.

82. The conclusion of the security transition should trigger a reimagining of United Nations engagement in Liberia. I therefore intend to provide, in a report after the conclusion of the transition, recommendations on the future of UNMIL and possible successor options, taking into account the performance of the Liberian security agencies and the situation in the country. As I advised in my report of 15 August 2014 (S/2014/598), however, Liberia will require long-term support in

professionalizing and sustaining its institutions and developing its infrastructure and should urgently explore options for bilateral or regional partnerships in preparation for the withdrawal of UNMIL.

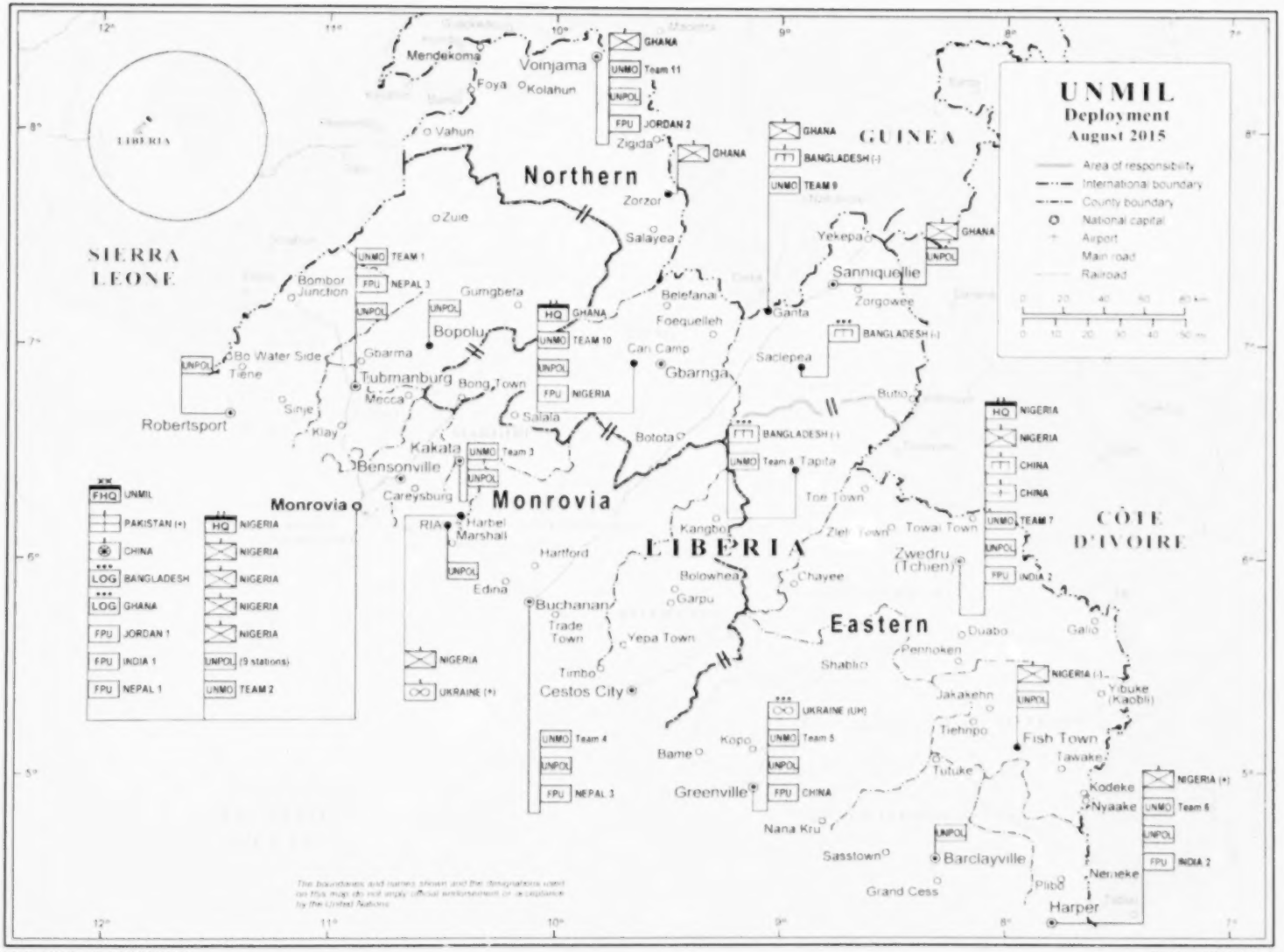
83. I wish to express my appreciation to Karin Landgren for her service as my Special Representative for Liberia and to Antonio Vigilante, who has served as the Officer-in-Charge of UNMIL since her departure. I also wish to thank all United Nations civilian and uniformed personnel for their commitment to peace in Liberia, in addition to troop- and police-contributing countries, the African Union, ECOWAS, the Mano River Union and other regional organizations, multilateral and bilateral partners, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, non-governmental organizations and other partners for their sustained support in consolidating peace in Liberia.

Annex

United Nations Mission in Liberia: military and police strength as at 1 August 2015

	Military component					
Country	*Military observers*	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Total*	*Formed police units*	*Police officers*
Argentina	–	–	–	–		9
Bangladesh	9	8	508	525		20
Benin	2	1	–	3		–
Bhutan	–	–	–	–		6
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	2	1	–	3		–
Bosnia and Herzegovina	–	–	–	–		7
Brazil	2	2	–	4		–
Bulgaria	2	–	–	2		–
China	2	6	558	566	140	4
Denmark	3	2	–	5		–
Ecuador	2	1	–	3		–
Egypt	8	–	–	8		4
Ethiopia	11	6	–	17		–
Fiji	–	–	–	–		–
Finland	–	1	–	1		–
France	–	1	–	1		–
Gambia	2	–	–	2		8
Germany	2	–	–	2		5
Ghana	13	8	814	835		30
India	–	–	–	–	244	12
Jordan	–	–	–	–	232	16
Kenya	–	–	–	–		25
Kyrgyzstan	3	–	–	3		3
Lithuania	–	–	–	–		1
Malaysia	6	1	–	7		–
Namibia	1	3	–	4		9
Nepal	2	3	15	20	259	26
Niger	2	–	–	2		–
Nigeria	10	7	1 372	1 389	120	35
Norway	–	–	–	–		20
Pakistan	9	9	121	139		–
Paraguay	1	1	–	2		–
Poland	2	–	–	2		5
Republic of Korea	1	1	–	2		3

	Military component					
Country	*Military observers*	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Total*	*Formed police units*	*Police officers*
Republic of Moldova	1	–	–	1	–	–
Romania	2	–	–	2	–	2
Russian Federation	3	–	–	3	–	5
Rwanda	–	–	–	–	–	3
Serbia	5	–	–	5	–	2
Sri Lanka	–	–	–	–	–	19
Sweden	–	–	–	–	–	14
Switzerland	–	–	–	–	–	1
Thailand	–	–	–	–	–	2
Togo	2	1	–	3	–	–
Turkey	–	–	–	–	–	9
Uganda	–	–	–	–	–	9
Ukraine	2	2	174	178	–	18
United States of America	4	4	–	8	–	2
Uruguay	–	–	–	–	–	–
Yemen	–	1	–	1	–	10
Zambia	2	–	–	2	–	22
Zimbabwe	3	–	–	3	–	30
Total	**121**	**70**	**3 562**	**3 753**	**995**	**393**


UNMIL
Deployment
August 2015
Area of responsibility
International boundary
County boundary
National capital
Airport
Main road
Railroad
LIBERIA
SIERRA LEONE
GUINEA
CÔTE D'IVOIRE
Northern
Eastern
Monrovia
Mendekoma
Voinjama
Foya
Kolahun
Vahun
Zigida
Zorzor
Zuie
Salayea
Yekepa
Sanniquellie
Zorgowee
Ganta
Belefanai
Foequelleh
Gumgbeta
Bopolu
Gbarma
Tubmanburg
Bong Town
Mecca
Sinje
Klay
Robertsport
Bo Water Side
Tiene
Bombor Junction
Gbarnga
Sacklepea
Buto
Botota
Salala
Kakata
Bensonville
Careysburg
RIA
Harbel
Marshall
Hartford
Edina
Buchanan
Trade Town
Yepa Town
Timbo
Cestos City
Kangbo
Bolowhea
Garpu
Chayee
Zwedru (Tchien)
Towai Town
Toe Town
Ziet Town
Tapita
Duabo
Pennoken
Shablo
Jakakehn
Tiehnpo
Fish Town
Tawake
Tuluke
Kodeke
Nyaake
Ybuke (Kaobli)
Barclayville
Sasstown
Nana Kru
Greenville
Bame
Kopo
Grand Cess
Pitbo
Nenneke
Harper
Camp
Gbarnga
Monrovia
FHQ UNMIL
PAKISTAN (+)
CHINA
LOG BANGLADESH
LOG GHANA
FPU JORDAN 1
FPU INDIA 1
FPU NEPAL 1
HQ NIGERIA
UNPOL (9 stations)
UNMO TEAM 2
UKRAINE (+)
UKRAINE (UH)
UNMO Team 4
UNMO Team 5
UNMO Team 6
FPU NEPAL 3
FPU CHINA
NIGERIA (+)
UNMO TEAM 1
FPU NEPAL 3
UNPOL
UNMO Team 3
HQ GHANA
UNMO TEAM 10
FPU NIGERIA
GHANA
UNMO Team 11
FPU JORDAN 2
BANGLADESH (-)
UNMO TEAM 9
BANGLADESH (+)
UNMO Team 8
CHINA
UNMO TEAM 7
FPU INDIA 2
NIGERIA (-)
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Geospatial Information Section (formerly Cartographic Section)